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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000713

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR D. MOZENA, B. NEULING
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2010
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#) [MDC](#)
SUBJECT: DUST-UP AT MDC,S HARVEST HOUSE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Eric Schultz under Section 1.4
b/d

1. (U) According to local press reports, a gang of youths occupied the MDC's Harvest House headquarters May 16-17 and demanded the removal of party Secretary-General Welshman Ncube, Deputy Secretary-General Gift Chimanihire, Treasurer Fletcher Dulini-Ncube and other senior executives. President Morgan Tsvangirai and Chairman Isaac Matongo were not included in the list. The youths reportedly attempted to confiscate certain party vehicles, including those belonging to Ncube and Chimanihire. MDC Spokesperson Paul Themba-Nyathi publicly attributed the fracas to &ZANU-PF infiltrators.⁸

2. (C) MDC Secretary General Welshman Ncube on May 18 confirmed to the Embassy details of the occupation by youths, whom Ncube said were in fact party members. According to Ncube, the attackers injured several people, including the Party Secretary for Harare, who suffered a broken arm, and the Mashonaland East Provincial Spokesperson, who had several teeth knocked out. Ncube alleged that unnamed MDC senior officials had orchestrated the disturbance because they feared they would lose their positions at the Party Congress (still scheduled for January). He said the party had called on police assistance to quell the disturbance, and four suspects had been arrested.

3. (C) COMMENT: Despite the March 31 parliamentary election results, the MDC leadership remains firmly in control of the party. However, internecine competition and debates over tactics in the run-up to the Party Congress unfortunately appear likely to fuel further tensions and to absorb the party's energies at a time when they would be better served connecting with growing public discontent over the country's economic meltdown and especially the collapse of public services (septel).
DELL